



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **News media tip leads ICE and Mexican law enforcement to baby-selling scheme** *Mother and accomplice arrested by Mexican authorities for scheme to sell four-week-old baby.*

DALLAS — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents here and in Mexico, working closely with Mexican authorities, yesterday stopped the sale and smuggling of a four-week-old baby boy across the border from Mexico into the United States.

Officers from Mexico's Federal Attorney General's Office of Organized Crime Division (PGR/SIEDO) and Mexico's Federal Investigative Agency (AFI) Thursday arrested Ana Luisa Hidalgo-Rivera, the woman who claims to be the baby's mother, and Alex Hernandez, the woman's accomplice. Both Hidalgo-Rivera and Hernandez are Mexican nationals.

Mexican officials used an undercover Televisa investigative reporter to pose as the buyer of the boy. Hidalgo-Rivera handed the boy to the reporter after the reporter handed a bag said to contain \$50,000 to Hidalgo-Rivera. Once the exchange was made, AFI agents arrested both suspects without incident in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

An undisclosed Dallas resident first learned of the baby-selling scheme via an Internet chat room, and then notified the local Spanish-language Univision television network, KUVN 23. Univision producers pretended to take over the purchase of the infant, and videotaped the on-camera Internet conversations with Hidalgo-Rivera holding the baby. At Univision's request, reporters with Televisa television station in Monterrey, Mexico, also met with and videotaped Hidalgo-Rivera and Hernandez in person with the baby.

According to Univision producers, Hidalgo-Rivera claimed to have previously sold two of her other babies, which were then smuggled across the border to the United States.

Univision producers met with ICE special agents from Dallas on Monday to report the incident and provide the evidence they had collected. ICE special agents in Dallas worked quickly through ICE's international offices in Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico, which then arranged a meeting with Mexican law enforcement to review the Univision-provided video- and audio-taped conversations. After the meeting, SIEDO agreed to prosecute the case in Mexico. Since the safety of the baby was the primary concern, ICE special agents and Mexican authorities immediately planned to meet Hidalgo-Rivera and Hernandez to effect the arrests on May 11 — only three days after ICE agents were originally contacted.

“International cooperation is a critical element of so many of ICE's investigations. In this case, ICE special agents in Dallas, Mexico City and Monterey used their professional relationships to help stop the sale of an innocent baby boy,” said Julie Myers, Assistant Secretary for ICE. “By working closely with our counterparts in Mexico, the case was quickly investigated and the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice.”

“Responsible investigative journalism by the Spanish-language television network Univision, and cooperation by police agencies in both countries, prevented child smugglers from profiting from this crime,” said Ambassador Antonio O. Garza. “While law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border deserve recognition for preventing an infant from being sold and smuggled, Univision reporters should also be credited for preventing a serious crime from taking place. The arrests of Hidalgo-Rivera and Hernandez demonstrate the importance of cross-border cooperation, and provide one more example of why democratic government depends on the press to investigate and report,” added Garza.

The child was turned over to Mexican child protective services. Both suspects and the child will be transported to Mexico City for judicial proceedings. It is unknown at this time if Hidalgo-Rivera and/or Hernandez are the parents of the child. The specific Mexican charges will be determined by the PGR in Mexico City.

ICE encourages the public to report any suspicious activity via its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. The hotline is staffed by trained investigators and available around the clock.

#ICE#

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*